Pet Overpopulation and Spay/Neuter - Beginner Lesson Plan

**Objective:** To help students understand the problem of pet overpopulation and how it can be solved.

**Materials:**

BD14868_ Crayons, markers or colored pencils

* Scissors
* Tape

BD14868_ Animal Faces Coloring Page

* Animal Shelter Image
* Homeless Image
* PowerPoint: It’s Good to Spay and Neuter Your Pets!

**Warm-up- Discuss Pet Overpopulation**

Ask students if they have ever seen animals without a home. Do they see them often? Do they look happy? Healthy? What type of dangers do they face?

Explain to children that every year, millions of dogs and cats are born that we cannot find homes for. Most of them end up living on the street. They face dangers such being hit by cars and buses, harsh weather, and not having enough food or clean water. Other dogs and cats live in small cages in animal shelters. They often are not fed well and don’t get enough exercise. Most of them will not find homes and must be put to sleep.

**Activity I - Animal Faces handout**

Give each student an Animal Faces handout. Have them color in and name each pet, then cut out each of the faces. They can each pick ONE animal from their sheet to keep; a few are then taped to the ANIMAL SHELTER image and the rest are taped to the OUTSIDE image.

**Ask** students the following questions:

* How many animals have homes?
* How many are living in the shelter and outside? Discuss what the lives of these animals are like.
* Was it hard to pick one animal?
* How do they feel about the other animals they left in the shelter or outside?
* Don’t all animals deserve a good home?
* What can we do to stop the problem?

**Activity II - Spay/Neuter**

Everyone loves to see baby animals, but ask the students if it’s fair to bring animals into the world that we do not have homes for and must instead live on the street or in a shelter. To stop the problem of homeless animals, we must stop our pets from having babies. To do this, our pets need an operation. We call this spaying for females and neutering for males.

**Discuss** Spaying and neutering facts with the **It’s Good to Spay and Neuter Your Pets! PowerPoint**. Below are explanations for each slide:

2 - Spayed or neutered animals live longer, healthier lives. Sterilized pets live an average of two to three years longer than pets that are not sterilized, and are less likely to get cancer and many other serious illnesses.

3 - Because sterilized pets lead healthier lives, spaying or neutering your pet can save you lots of $$$ on vet bills.

4 - Spayed or neutered animals are calmer and better behaved. They spray and mark less, and are less likely to want to roam away from your home. Spaying eliminates messy and annoying heat cycles.

5 - Spaying and neutering increases your pet’s loyalty and focuses their attention on you so they are easier to train.

6 - Spaying and neutering animals reduces aggression and helps protect children from dog bites.

7 - Spay/neuter procedures are not dangerous or painful. Spaying and neutering are the most common surgeries performed on animals, and are extremely safe with minimal recovery time: usually a week to 10 days.

8 – A spay/neuter procedure is less stressful for your pet than it is to have litter after litter of puppies and kittens.

9 - Spaying or neutering does not cause pets to become fat or lazy; too little exercise and too much food cause your pet to be overweight. Sterilizing a dog will not alter its instinct to protect your home and family.

**Final Discussion – What can you do?**

Ask students what they can do to help stop the overpopulation of animals. See what ideas you can elicit from them. Below are some ideas to get you started:

* Spay or neuter your pet at two months of age – don’t wait for the first litter!
* Join in the fight against pet overpopulation. Tell others!
* Educate your friends and family about spay/neuter facts vs. myths
* It’s a small price to pay for the health of your pet and the prevention of more unwanted animals!